

Telecommunication Education Access Fund Surcharge

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 39-1-61, commencing January 1, 2004, a monthly “Telecommunication Education Access Fund” surcharge of 26¢ will be levied by each local telecommunication service provider to its retail telephone users. The monthly surcharge will be assessed to each residence and business telephone access line or trunk. The purpose of the program is to fund a basic level of Internet connectivity for all qualified schools (kindergarten through grade 12) and libraries in the state. The fund will be used to assist in paying for the costs of acquiring, installing and using telecommunication technologies to access the Internet. The surcharge shall be identified as “Schools and Library Fund” on subscribers’ telephone bills.

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be responsible for the administration of the program and must comply with all the requirements of the Federal Universal E-Rate program in evaluating bids and selecting products and services. The enacted law exempts state, local and quasi-governmental agencies from the surcharge and requires the General Assembly to annually review the surcharge to determine if it should be applied to wireless telephone service.